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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI				
2	DDCI				
3	EXDIR				
4	D/ICS				
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6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC				
11	IG				
12	Compt	DLS for ES	2/21/84		
13	D/EEO				
14	D/Pers				
15	D/OLL		✓		
16	D/PAO		✓		
17	SA/IA				
18	AO/DCI				
19	C/IPD/OIS				
20	F/LA/DDO		✓		
21					
22					
	SUSPENSE		Date		

Remarks

STAT

Executive Secretary

2/14/84

Date

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

Executive Registry
84- 824

February 10, 1984

General John W. Vessey
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear General Vessey:

As members of both the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Armed Services Committee, we are writing to express our deep concern over an article which appeared in yesterday's Washington Post.

The article, "Reconnaissance Flights Planned in Honduras," by Fred Hiatt and T.R. Reid, carries with it, in our view, some serious implications for the safety of our soldiers and for their ability to fulfill the mission assigned them. It is disturbing that the reporters base their story on "a five-paragraph Pentagon release." A leak of this information, in our view, would have been serious, but it is troubling to know that the Pentagon knowingly released this detailed mission plan.

It would seem ill-advised to provide information which results in a front page story detailing a planned military operation to include the dates for the operation, the unit involved, the location that unit will be based, the equipment to be used, and the mission to be undertaken. This is especially true when the unit -- the 244 Military Intelligence Battalion -- has a mission where the element of secrecy is vital to its success.

We have a number of questions about this which are attached. We look forward to your responses and intend to closely review this matter in our roles on the two committees. Our staff, Jim Dykstra and Arnold Punaro, are available for any coordination. Your assistance and consideration are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

William S. Cohen

Sam Nunn

DCI
EXEC
REG

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1) Whose decision was it to publicly release this information?

2) Were the Joint Chiefs of Staff consulted about the advisability of making this press release? If so, what was the recommendation made by the JCS?

3) What other Defense Department entities were consulted, and what was their advice? Did CINCSouth concur in the public release?

4) Was the release cleared through the office of the Assistant to the Secretary for Intelligence Oversight, and what was that office's advice?

5) What is the JCS's general view on publicly providing detailed information on a sensitive operation in advance of that operation?

6) What are the specific goals, and what results are anticipated in advance of the mission? What is the anticipated cost of the mission?

7) Since this mission is an intelligence-gathering one, does the JCS believe it can still be carried out without a degradation in the ability to accomplish the mission goals?

8) Do the JCS believe that the members of the military intelligence unit are placed at greater risk, since the location at which they will be based is provided in the story?

9) Do the JCS believe that the risk is increased, since the type of aircraft they will be flying in their reconnaissance missions is provided?

10) Do the JCS believe the mission is compromised as a result of the release?

11) Do the JCS believe that routine releases should be made by the Pentagon Press Office on future operations of this sort? If so, why?

12) If not, what recommendations would the JCS make to prevent the release of sensitive information in intelligence-gathering, or other, operations?

13) When the mission is completed, would you please inform us as to its success, the information gained, and the utility of that information to the various users?

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